

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Previously Presented) An ion elution unit generating metal ions by applying a voltage between electrodes,

wherein an interval between the electrodes becomes narrower from an upstream side to a downstream side with respect to a water current flowing through an inside of a casing of the ion elution unit.

2. (Currently Amended) An ion elution unit generating metal ions by applying a voltage between electrodes, comprising:

a casing having a water inlet and a water outlet allowing a water current to flow ~~from the inlet,~~ through the casing, constantly in a horizontal direction, ~~and out from the inlet to the outlet in a horizontal direction;~~ and

terminals that are so laid as to extend ~~run~~ from the electrodes and out of the casing, ~~out of the casing,~~ the terminals being disposed on an upstream side with respect to the water current flowing through an inside of the casing,

wherein the electrodes extend along a direction of water flowing out of the inlet.

3. (Currently Amended) An ion elution unit generating metal ions by applying a voltage between electrodes, comprising:

a casing having a water inlet and a water outlet allowing a water current to flow ~~from the inlet,~~ through the casing, constantly in a horizontal direction, ~~and out from the inlet to the outlet in a horizontal direction;~~ and

terminals that are so laid as to ~~extend run~~ from the electrodes ~~and out out~~ of the casing, the terminals being disposed on an upstream side with respect to the water current flowing through an inside of the casing, and a supporting portion for supporting downstream-side parts of the electrodes being formed on an inner surface of the casing,

wherein the electrodes extend along a direction of water flowing out of the inlet.

4. (Currently Amended) An ion elution unit generating metal ions by applying a voltage between electrodes, comprising:

a casing having a casing body and a lid attached to the casing body, the lid having a support that extends into a chamber defined inside the casing;

terminals laid from the electrodes being so formed as to penetrate a bottom wall of the casing body ~~easing of the ion elution unit~~ and protrude downward; and

a sleeve that engages with a surface of an electrode and makes contact with the support when the lid is attached to the casing body.

5. (Currently Amended) An ion elution unit generating metal ions by applying a voltage between electrodes, comprising:

a casing body;

a water inflow port and a water outflow port extending from the casing body, a cross-sectional flow area of the water inflow port and a cross-sectional flow area of the water outflow port being smaller than a cross-sectional flow area of the casing body ~~formed in a casing of the ion elution unit,~~

wherein the water outflow port is given a smaller cross-sectional flow area than the water inflow port.

6. (Currently Amended) An ion elution unit generating metal ions by applying a voltage between electrodes, comprising:

a casing body; and

a water inflow port and a water outflow port extending from the casing body,

~~wherein a cross-sectional flow area of the casing body area of an interior space of the casing of the ion elution unit gradually decreases from an upstream side to a downstream side.~~

7. (Currently Amended) An ion elution unit generating metal ions by applying a voltage between electrodes, comprising:

a casing having a water inflow port and a water outflow port, such that a water current flows through the casing constantly in a horizontal direction from the inlet port to the outlet port formed in a casing of the ion elution unit,

wherein a bottom surface of the casing and an inner surface of a lowest portion of the water outflow port share a common plane.

8. (Previously Presented) The ion elution unit according to any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein, of the electrodes, a positive electrode is made of one of silver, copper, zinc, or silver-copper alloy.

9. (Previously Presented) The ion elution unit according any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein, of the electrodes, both positive and negative electrodes are made of one of silver, copper, zinc, or silver-copper alloy.

10. (Previously Presented) An appliance, comprising:
the ion elution unit according to claim 9,
wherein polarities of the electrodes are reversed periodically.

11. (Previously Presented) An appliance, comprising:
the ion elution unit according to claim 9,
wherein the metal ions generated by the ion elution unit are used by being added to water.

12. (Previously Presented) An appliance comprising:
the ion elution unit according to claim 10,
wherein the metal ions generated by the ion elution unit are used by being added to water.

13. (Previously Presented) The appliance according to claim 11,
wherein the appliance is a washing machine.

14. (Previously Presented) The appliance according to claim 12,
wherein the appliance is a washing machine.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Canceled)

17. (Canceled)

18. (Canceled)

19. (Canceled)

20. (Canceled)

21. (Canceled)

22. (Canceled)

23. (Canceled)

24. (Canceled)